



ALIEN INVASION



Ex-Trump officials urge Texas to declare border 'invasion'

National Guardsmen stand watch over a fence near the International bridge where thousands of Haitian migrants have created a makeshift camp, on Sept. 18, 2021, in Del Rio, Texas.

Associated Press

By ACACIA CORONADO
and PAUL J. WEBER

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Former Trump administration officials are pressing Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to declare an "invasion"

along the U.S.-Mexico border and give thousands of state troopers and National Guard members sweeping new authority to turn back migrants, essentially bestowing enforcement powers that have been a

federal responsibility. The concept is legally dubious, nearly unprecedented and would almost certainly face swift court challenges, according to some constitutional experts. The urging comes as the

Republican governor prepares to announce Wednesday "unprecedented actions" to deter migrants coming to Texas. The move came in response to the Biden administration announcing last week it

will end the use of a public health law that has limited asylum in the name of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

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Ex-Trump officials urge Texas to declare border 'invasion'

Continued from Front

It is unclear whether Abbott, who is up for reelection in November and is already installing more border barrier and allowing troopers to arrest migrants on trespassing charges, supports the aggressive proposals former Trump officials are pushing. Abbott did not elaborate on what steps he will announce Wednesday.

Border Patrol officials say they are planning for as many as 18,000 arrivals daily once the health policy, known as the Title 42 authority, expires in May. Last week, about 7,100 migrants were coming a day to the southern U.S. border.

But the way former Trump immigration officials see it, Texas and Arizona can pick up where the federal government leaves off once the policy ends.

Their plan involves a novel interpretation of the U.S. Constitution to have the National Guard or state police forcibly send migrants to Mexico, without regard to immigration laws and law enforcement procedures. Border enforcement has always been a federal responsibility, and in Texas, state leaders have not been pushing for such a move.

Tom Homan, the former



A line of Texas Department of Safety vehicles line up on the Texas side of the Rio Grande with Mexico visible, right, near an encampment of migrants, many from Haiti, on Sept. 22, 2021, in Del Rio, Texas.

Associated Press

acting director for Immigration and Customs Enforcement under Trump, said at a border security conference in San Antonio last week he had spoken with Abbott about the idea.

"We've had discussions with his attorneys in his office, 'Is there a way to use this clause within the Constitution where it talks about invasion?'" Homan said during the Border Security Expo.

Homan said those talks took place about three months ago, and on Tuesday described the governor's office as "noncommittal but willing to listen."

In Arizona, Republican Gov. Doug Ducey has also been under pressure within his party to declare that

the state is being invaded and use extraordinary powers normally reserved for war. But Ducey, who is term-limited and not on the ballot in 2022, has not embraced the theory and has avoided commenting directly on it.

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, a Republican, issued a legal opinion in February declaring that Ducey has the power to use National Guard troops and state law enforcement to forcibly send migrants back. Brnovich is locked in a tough Republican U.S. Senate primary in which border security is a top issue.

Driving the effort on the right is the Center for Renewing America, a con-

servative policy think tank led by former Trump administration officials. It includes Ken Cuccinelli, an immigration hard-liner and former Homeland Security official under Trump. He argued that states are entitled to defend themselves from immediate danger or invasion, as it is defined by the "invasion clause," under the "states self-defense clause." While speaking Tuesday to a conservative talk radio station, Abbott's remarks about constitutional authority were in relation to Congress, which he said had the only power to reduce the flow of migrants.

"We'll be taking unprecedented action," Abbott told radio station KCRS. "Congress has to stop talking about it, has to stop complaining about it, has to stop going to the border and looking at it. Congress has to take action, just like Texas is taking action."

Asked if he considered what was happening on the Texas border "an invasion," Abbott did not use those words but said he would be discussing it Wednesday.

Cuccinelli said in practice, he envisions the plan would look similar to the enforcement of Title 42, which circumvented U.S. obligations under American law and international treaty to

provide asylum. He said he has not spoken with Abbott and said the governor's current sweeping border mission, known as Operation Lone Star, has put little dent in the number of people crossing the border. The mission has also drawn criticism from Guard members over long deployments and little to do, and some arrests have appeared to have no connection to border security.

"Until you are actually returning people to Mexico, what you are doing will have no effect," Cuccinelli said.

Emily Berman, who teaches constitutional law at the University of Houston, said the "invasion clause" cited by proponents is tucked into a broader constitutional assurance that the U.S. must defend states from invasion and domestic violence. Additionally, she said, the "state self-defense clause" says states cannot engage in warlike actions or foreign policy unless invaded.

Berman said she hasn't seen the constitutional clauses used since the 1990s, when the courts ruled that they did not have jurisdiction to decide what qualified an invasion, but believed that one could only be done by another governmental entity. □



In this Sunday, March 21, 2021, photo, the company logo adorns a sign outside a Toyota dealership in Lakewood, Colo.

Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Toyota customers soon won't be able to get U.S. federal tax credits for buying electric or hybrid vehicles.

The automaker expects that sometime before the end of June it will reach a

200,000-vehicle cap on the credits, Bob Carter, Toyota's head of North American sales, said Wednesday. After that, the credits will be phased out over the next year, reaching zero, as Tesla and General

Toyota buyers soon will lose U.S. electric vehicle tax credits

Motors already have.

The lack of credits is problematic for automakers shifting from petroleum-powered vehicles to batteries in the effort to reduce emissions, meet government fuel-economy standards and fight climate change. Nissan is about 30,000 vehicles away from reaching the cap, and others will follow as more EVs are introduced.

Tesla, the top seller of electric vehicles in the world, and GM already are at a price disadvantage to other automakers without the credits, and Toyota

soon will be. Additional EV tax credits are in the Build Back Better spending bill backed by President Joe Biden, which is stalled in Congress.

Toyota reached the cap largely by selling plug-in gas-electric hybrid vehicles. The company's plug-in RAV4 Prime small SUV with 42 miles of electric range earns the buyer a \$7,500 credit, the largest available. The Prius Prime plug-in, with 25 miles of electric range, gets \$4,500. Toyota previously had offered a fully electric RAV4, but it didn't sell well and

was canceled. It's rolling out a fully electric model called the bZ4X with 250 miles per charge, this summer. The Build Back Better bill would give EV buyers a \$7,500 tax credit through 2026 to charge up sales. But the following year, only electric vehicles made in the U.S. would qualify for the credit. And the base credit rises by \$4,500 if the vehicle is made at a U.S. plant that runs under a union-negotiated collective bargaining agreement. Only GM, Ford and Stellantis vehicles would qualify. □

Nursing home care, funding system need overhaul, report says

By MATT SEDENSKY

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Nursing home residents are subjected to ineffective care and poor staffing, while facility finances are shrouded in secrecy and regulatory lapses go unenforced, according to a report Wednesday that called for wholesale changes in an industry whose failures have been spotlighted by the pandemic.

To anyone who saw the scourge of COVID-19 on the country's most vulnerable, the findings of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine might seem sobering but unsurprising, as the long-term care system's inadequacies were made plain by more than 150,000 resident deaths. The authors of the 605-page report insist it could be an impetus to address issues that have gotten little more than lip service for decades.

"The public is so concerned about the quality of care that most people really fear their family having to be in a nursing home," said Betty Ferrell, a nurse who chaired the report committee. "We're very optimistic that our government officials will respond to what has really been a travesty." The report covers a vast cross-section of long-term care, from granular details such as the way facilities are designed to founda-



A woman holds onto the walker once belonging to her mother who died of COVID-19 while at a nursing home, as her family prays before Thanksgiving dinner, Nov. 26, 2020, in Deer Park, N.Y.

Associated Press

tional issues that would require massive political capital and investment to address. Among them: the authors advocate for creating a new national long-term care system that would exist outside of Medicaid, the program that is at the center of most long-term care financing. The likelihood of such a proposal successfully winding its way through Congress seems low in the current political climate.

The most recent federal attempt to reform long-term care financing was a voluntary long-term care insurance program known as the CLASS Act. It was included in the Afford-

able Care Act but later repealed when the Obama administration found it unworkable.

"It has been a long time since we as a country have been wanting to dig in and reform how we finance, pay, regulate and delivery nursing home services," said David Grabowski, a nursing home expert and Harvard Medical School professor who served on the report committee.

The industry's biggest lobbying groups insisted reforms must be met by increased government funding. The American Health Care Association said "what we cannot support are unfunded mandates."

Katie Smith Sloan, who leads LeadingAge, which represents nonprofit nursing homes, called the report "a piercing wake-up call" about an industry "in desperate need of an overhaul," but likewise said the success of remaking the system would depend on how funding issues are addressed.

"As policymakers consider how to enact the report's recommendations, they must back their actions with sufficient funding to make changes a reality," she said. "Without that, the committee's work will be for naught."

On the issue of nursing home staffing, which advo-

cates have repeatedly said is too low, too untrained and too underpaid, the report's authors called for facilities to have at least one registered nurse on duty at all times and for an infection prevention and control specialist and social worker to also be on staff.

More broadly, across all staffing in homes, including nurse aides who make up the bulk of front-line caregivers, the authors called for additional study on optimal staffing.

Industry lobbyists have fiercely fought against more stringent staffing requirements. Federal law only requires nursing homes to have sufficient staff to meet residents' needs, but nearly all interpretation of what that means is left to states. President Joe Biden, too, has called for establishing national staffing minimums.

Among the more routine subjects in the report, but one that nonetheless impacts residents' everyday lives, the authors call for homes to prioritize private rooms and bathrooms instead of the communal ones that can fuel infections and underscore the institutional setting. And in a blunt reminder of how bleak life in nursing homes can be, the report notes most residents spend "little if any time outdoors," calling for facilities to make outside access more accessible. □

U.S. official says Russians must access the truth on Ukraine

LARNACA, Cyprus (AP)

— Russian "disinformation" about its war against Ukraine needs to be exposed, including on Russia's "war crimes," a U.S. State Department official said on a visit to Cyprus Wednesday.

Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland said Russian "lies" have evolved to the point of blaming Ukrainians for actions by Russian forces, including "the war crimes we see on the ground."

"So we all have an inter-

est in exposing Russian disinformation, ensuring our citizens have the truth and ensuring that Russian citizens also (have the truth) ... despite the Iron Curtain that Putin has put down over that," Nuland said. Nuland was in Cyprus as part of a five-nation tour aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and rallying support for Ukraine.

Asked whether the U.S. has asked Cyprus to transfer its Russian-made weapons, including short-range anti-aircraft batteries and tanks,

to Ukraine, Nuland said Washington is in touch with other nations about supporting Ukraine "in any way that they can."

"It is not for the United States to ask of Cyprus. It is for Cyprus to make its own decisions about what it wants to and can do," she said.

Cypriot officials said no weapons would be transferred to Ukraine without securing replacements, to avoid weakening the war-divided island nation's defenses. □



U.S. Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, right, is joined by Ukraine's Ambassador to Cyprus Ruslan Nimchynskyi at the site of an anchor that the Ukrainian city of Odesa donated to the Cypriot coastal town of Larnaca during their twinning on Wednesday, April 6, 2022.

Associated Press

Detroit is largest city to challenge 2020 census numbers



Fishermen move their boat up the Detroit River in Detroit, as fog covers the Windsor, Ontario skyline Wednesday, March 16, 2022. Associated Press

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER and COREY WILLIAMS**
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Majority-Black Detroit has become the largest U.S. city to challenge its figures from the 2020 census following a national head count in which the U.S. Census Bureau acknowledges that a higher percentage of African Americans were undercounted than last decade, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Leaders of Michigan's largest city, which is more than three-quarters Black, had questioned the results of the 2020 census since last December when they released a report suggesting that more than 8% of the

occupied homes in 10 Detroit neighborhoods may have been undercounted. Detroit filed its challenge late last week, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In a letter to the Census Bureau, Mayor Michael Duggan said insufficient resources and not enough census takers were devoted to the count in Detroit, resulting in an undercount of unoccupied homes that could amount to tens of thousand of residents being overlooked.

"The Census Bureau now has an obligation to set the record straight," Duggan said. The 2020 census data showed Detroit with 639,111 residents, while estimates from 2019 put the

city's population at 670,052 residents. A drop of 31,000 residents would be "really implausible," Jeffrey Morenoff, a University of Michigan sociology professor who helped conduct a study on the undercount for the city, said when the report was released in December.

Detroit is no stranger to census challenges. Then-Mayor Coleman Young sued after the 1990 census, and the numbers were later adjusted.

Even though the overall U.S. population was missed by a small percentage, 0.24%, during a once-a-decade head count challenged by the pandemic, natural disasters and political interference from the Trump administration, some minority groups were overlooked at greater rates than the previous decade. The Black population was undercounted by 3.3%, those who identified as some other race had a 4.3% undercount, almost 5% of the Hispanic population was missed and more than 5.6% of American Indians living on reservations were undercounted.

Detroit is among almost

two dozen cities and counties that have challenged their census figures so far. States and municipalities have until the middle of next year to appeal their figures through the Census Bureau's Count Question Resolution operation. Challenges are rarely successful, but the outcome could determine whether the cities and counties get their fair share when it comes to the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in annual federal funding.

In Detroit's case, Duggan said that federal funding for the city tied to the 2010 census in the previous decade exceeded \$37 billion. "A roughly 8% undercount of Detroit's population in the 2020 census creates disastrous financial consequences for the City," Duggan said.

The overwhelmingly majority of the municipalities challenging their census figures are small towns, with more than half of them coming from the rural South. About half a dozen have said in their challenges that prisons in their communities were overlooked during the count.

Residents of prisons, nursing homes and college dorms

— also known as group quarters — were among the most difficult people to count during the 2020 census since students on campus were sent home when the pandemic began in the U.S. in March 2020, and prisons and nursing homes went into lockdowns against the spread of the coronavirus.

Because of the difficulties in counting these residents, the Census Bureau last month created a separate program for challenges of group quarter counts.

Leaders of municipalities making the challenges said an incorrect count could cost them state and federal grants. Mayor Joe Sparks of Bennett, Iowa, said he is worried that the town won't get money for two emergency power generators from the Federal Emergency Management Agency if its census numbers aren't corrected.

The town's population went from 405 in 2010 to 347 in 2020, "and that is very hard for me to believe," Sparks said.

"The reduced population numbers will affect Bennett residents adversely," he said. □

Ex-sheriff bribery gets 10 years; already has life for rapes

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A former Louisiana sheriff was sentenced Wednesday to 10 years in prison for a federal bribery conviction, to be served at the same as his four life sentences for earlier convictions for raping boys.

U.S. District Judge Jane Triche Milazzo also ordered Rodney J. "Jack" Strain to pay a \$10,000 fine, federal prosecutors said in a news release Wednesday.

Strain pleaded guilty to one of 16 federal charges against him on Dec. 1, 2021, and prosecutors dropped the others.

The plea came weeks after a St. Tammany Parish jury convicted Strain on eight charges including four counts of aggravated rape against children less than 13 years old — a crime



Former St. Tammany Parish Sheriff Jack Strain, center, walks into the parish courthouse before the start of closing arguments in his trial on multiple counts of sex crimes in Covington, La., on Nov. 8, 2021.

which carries an automatic life sentence.

Strain, who served five terms before losing the

2015 election, admitted using his authority as sheriff to

steer profits from a \$1 million work-release contract to himself, his family and two of his top deputies.

His sworn statement in federal court said he hid the deputies' involvement in the scheme.

One man who pleaded guilty in the federal case told the state court jury that Strain molested him when he was a child, gave him a job when he was deeply in debt and later pressured him to join the work-release scheme.

Strain was sentenced in February on the state charges. Judge Bruce A. Simpson added 30 years for crimes against two of Strain's relatives and ordered him to pay \$30,000 in fines and nearly \$28,000 for the costs of his prosecution, news agencies reported. □

Associated Press

Iran says it gave long-sought answers to U.N. atomic watchdog

By NASSER KARIMI

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran on Wednesday said it supplied the United Nations' nuclear watchdog with documents explaining the discovery of suspect enriched uranium traces, state media reported, the first acknowledgement from Tehran that it had answered the agency's long-standing demands.

The head of Iran's civilian Atomic Energy Organization, Mohammad Eslami, said Iran sent the requested explanations on March 20 about several former undeclared sites in Iran where there was evidence of past nuclear activity.

The deadline came as part of an agreement announced last month to resolve the problem of undeclared uranium particles in Iran by June long a source of tension between Tehran and the U.N. atomic watchdog.

The thorny issue is separate from now-stalled talks to revive Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers, which collapsed four years ago when former President Donald Trump withdrew the



In this Saturday, March 5, 2022, file photo, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Mohammad Eslami speaks in a joint press briefing with International Atomic Energy Organization, IAEA, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi in Tehran.

Associated Press

United States from the accord and imposed crushing sanctions on Iran. In the meantime, Iran has vastly expanded its nuclear work. As the fate of a renewed

nuclear deal hangs in the balance, long-sought answers about Iran's old but undeclared nuclear sites would improve trust and solve a major sticking point

in its negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Eslami told reporters that Iran had handed over documents to the U.N. watchdog about the three requested sites in Iran, without elaborating. He expected agency inspectors to visit Iran "to review the answers" and finish a report on the subject by late June, he added.

The Vienna-based IAEA declined to comment on Eslami's remarks.

The IAEA in 2019 first discovered the traces of man-made uranium that suggested they were once connected to Iran's nuclear program. U.S. intelligence agencies, Western nations and the IAEA have said Iran ran an organized nuclear weapons program until 2003. Iran has long denied ever seeking nuclear weapons.

As a member of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Iran is obligated to explain the radioactive traces and to provide assurances that they are not being used as part of a nuclear weapons program. The IAEA has staked its credibility on find-

ing information about the sites, with its chief, Rafael Grossi, routinely lambasting Iran for its failure to answer where the radioactive particles came from and where they are now.

Eslami on Wednesday claimed that one of the particles discovered by IAEA inspectors does not exist in Iran, without offering evidence or details. He blamed regional arch-enemy Israel for "sowing doubts" about the nature of Iran's nuclear program. Israel has said it believes Iran would pursue a nuclear weapon, despite Western intelligence assessments indicating otherwise.

Tehran currently enriches uranium up to 60% purity its highest level ever and a short technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90% and far greater than the nuclear deal's 3.67% cap. Its stockpile of enriched uranium continues to grow as nuclear talks in Vienna founder, worrying nuclear nonproliferation experts that Iran could be closer to the threshold of having enough material for an atomic weapon if it chose to pursue one. □

NATO chief says Finland, Sweden welcome to apply to join

By LORNE COOK

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO would quickly welcome Finland and Sweden into its ranks with open arms if they decided to apply, the military alliance's top civilian official said Wednesday, as Russia's war on Ukraine spurs public support in the two Nordic countries for membership.

The military organization might also be ready to provide security guarantees to the countries if any potential membership bid angers Russia, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

A poll last month by Finnish broadcaster YLE showed that, for the first time, more than 50% of Finns support joining the Western military alliance. In neighboring Sweden, a similar poll showed that those in favor

of NATO membership outnumber those against.

"If they decide to apply, I expect that all allies will welcome them," Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels, as NATO foreign ministers met to discuss the war in Ukraine. "We know that they can easily join this alliance if they decide to apply."

Before launching the war on Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin demanded that the 30-nation military organization stop expanding and pull its troops back from Russia's borders. So the prospect of neighboring Finland, and Sweden, joining is unlikely to be welcomed in Moscow.

To shield them, Stoltenberg said NATO member countries might be prepared to provide a security guarantee to cover the two neutral nations from when they

announce a possible membership bid until their applications are endorsed.

Once members, they would benefit from NATO's collective defense clause, which obliges all members to come to the aid of any ally that comes under attack.

"I am certain that we will find ways to address concerns they may have regarding the period between the potential application and the final ratification,"

Stoltenberg said. He declined to speculate about what those security guarantees might involve.

Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said his country's lawmakers are due this month to debate a government white paper on security, including an option for NATO accession. He said Russia's invasion of Ukraine



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks as he arrives for a meeting of NATO foreign ministers at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, April 6, 2022.

Associated Press

has changed public opinion.

"In three or four weeks we have a majority, first time ever" in favor of joining, Haavisto said.

He said Finland knows that "Russia is ready to take big-

ger risks, as we can see in Ukraine, bigger risks also for its own security. We can also see that Russia is capable of gathering more than 100,000 men against just one country, even without touching its reserves." □

Rights groups charge 'ethnic cleansing' in Ethiopia's Tigray

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA

Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) —

Widespread abuses against civilians in the western part of Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have charged in a new report.

The crimes were perpetrated by security officials and civilian authorities from the neighboring Amhara region, sometimes "with the acquiescence and possible participation of Ethiopian federal forces," the rights groups say in the report released Wednesday.

The abuses are "part of a widespread and systematic attack against the Tigrayan civilian population that amount to crimes against humanity as well as war crimes," the report says.

Ethiopian federal authorities strongly refute allegations they have deliberately targeted Tigrayans for violent attacks. They said at the outbreak of the war in Nov. 2020 that their objective was to disarm the rebellious leaders of Tigray.

Ethiopian authorities said Wednesday that they are "carefully examining" allegations in the rights groups' report. While the report has "ideas that are not useful



Refugees who fled the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region ride a bus going to the Village 8 temporary shelter, near the Sudan-Ethiopia border, in Hamdayet, eastern Sudan on Dec. 1, 2020.

Associated Press

for any peace effort, the government will reaffirm its determination to investigate all human rights violations and make public the results," said a statement from the Government Communication Service.

The report, the result of a months-long investigation including more than 400 interviews, charges that hundreds of thousands of Tigrayans have been forced to leave their homes in a violent campaign of unlawful killings, sexual assaults, mass arbitrary detentions, livestock pillaging, and the

denial of humanitarian assistance.

Widespread atrocities have been reported in the Tigray war, with Ethiopian government troops and their allies, including troops from neighboring Eritrea, facing most of the charges.

Fighters loyal to the party of Tigray's leaders the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF also have been accused of committing abuses as the war spread into neighboring regions. Fighters affiliated with the TPLF deliberately killed dozens of people, gang-raped

dozens of women and pillaged property for a period of several weeks last year in Amhara region, Amnesty said in a report released in February.

The new report by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International focuses on attacks targeting Tigrayans in western Tigray and describes them as "ethnic cleansing," a term that refers to forcing a population from a region through expulsions and other violence, often including killings and rapes.

Publicly displayed signs in

several towns across western Tigray urged Tigrayans to leave, and local officials in meetings discussed plans to remove Tigrayans, according to the report. Pamphlets appeared to give Tigrayans urgent ultimatums to leave or be killed, the report says.

"They kept saying every night, 'We will kill you ... Go out of the area,'" said one woman from the town of Baeker, speaking of threats she faced from an Amhara militia group, according to the report. Western Tigray has long been contested territory. Amhara authorities say the area was under their control until the 1990s when the TPLF-led federal government redrew internal boundaries that put the territory within Tigray's borders. Amhara officials moved swiftly to take over the region when the war broke out.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken asserted in March 2021 that ethnic cleansing had taken place in western Tigray, marking the first time a top official in the international community openly described the situation as such. That allegation was dismissed by Ethiopian authorities as "a completely unfounded and spurious verdict against the Ethiopian government." □

Black boxes from China Eastern crash sent to U.S. for analysis



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, a search and rescue worker holds the second orange-colored "black box" recorder which recovered at the China Eastern flight crash site in Tengxian County on Sunday, March 27, 2022, in southern China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Both black boxes from a passenger plane crash in southern China last month that killed 132 people are being analyzed by U.S. experts at a government lab in Washington, D.C.

The National Transportation Safety Board said Tuesday it is helping its Chinese counterparts download information from the flight data recorder. The American agency said last week it was doing the same for the cockpit voice recorder. Both may have been damaged by the impact of the crash. If the information on them can be recovered,

it could shed light on why the China Eastern Boeing 737-800 went into a sudden nosedive and slammed into the ground in a mountainous area on March 21. The crash left a 20-meter- (65-foot-) deep crater in a mountainside, shattered the plane and set off a fire in the surrounding forest. More than 49,000 pieces of plane debris were found. It took two days to find the cockpit voice recorder and six days for the flight data recorder, which was buried 1.5 meters (5 feet) underground.

U.S. accident investigators arrived in China last week-

end to assist the investigation by the Civil Aviation Administration of China. The NTSB team is taking part because the plane was manufactured in the United States.

Chinese officials have said a preliminary investigation report would be completed within 30 days of the crash.

Flight MU5735 with 123 passengers and nine crew members was headed from the city of Kunming in southwestern China to Guangzhou, a provincial capital and export manufacturing hub near Hong Kong in the southeast. □

El Salvador threatens prison for media sharing gang messages

By **MARCOS ALEMÁN**

Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — El Salvador's

congress, pushing further in the government's dramatic crackdown on gangs, has authorized prison sentences of 10 to 15 years for news media that reproduce or disseminate messages from the gangs, alarming press freedom groups.

The vote late Tuesday was the latest in a flurry of legislative action against the gangs after 62 suspected gang killings on March 26 led President Nayib Bukele to seek and win a state of emergency. Harsh measures against imprisoned gang members and increased prison sentences followed, as well as the arrests of some 6,000 suspected gang members.

But the newest law expands Bukele's offensive to the press, another of his frequent targets. "We consider these reforms to be a clear attempt at censorship of media," the El Salvador Journalists Association said in a statement Wednesday. "Prohibiting journalism from reporting the reality in



El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele speaks to the press at Mexico's National Palace after meeting with the President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in Mexico City, March 12, 2019.

which thousands of people inhabiting these gang-controlled communities live ... will create an illusion that is not faithful to the truth."

The reforms passed with affirmative votes from 63 of the 84 lawmakers and went into effect when published Tuesday night in the official gazette.

The law says that "radio, television, written or digital

media" would face 10 to 15 years in prison for "the reproduction or transmission to the general population of messages or statements originating or presumably originating from said criminal groups, that could generate anxiety and panic in the population."

The measure also establishes prison sentences of 10 to 15 years for painting the

sort of graffiti commonly used to mark gang territory in neighborhoods across El Salvador. Bukele has lashed out at the media, as well as nongovernmental organizations and international bodies that have been critical of some of the measures taken against the gangs. He accuses them of siding with the criminals. Under the state of emer-

gency, the government has limited freedom of association, suspended the right to be informed of one's rights at the time of arrest and denied access to lawyers. A suspect can now be held for 15 days without charges rather than 72 hours. Imprisoned gang members had their meals reduced to twice a day, are not allowed out of their cells and had their mattresses taken. Bukele said via Twitter Tuesday that he had sent proposals to the Legislative Assembly, adding, "We will see, once again, who is with the people and who is with the gangs."

Marcela Pineda, a lawmaker from Bukele's New Ideas Party, said Tuesday that, "With those reforms we are telling the gangsters that they can't send audios or text chains to generate fear in the population." Bukele had hit that theme earlier in the day, saying there were rumors gangs might retaliate for the crackdown by attacking civilians and he threatened to withhold food from imprisoned gang members if they did. □

U.N. envoy says he's concerned about Yemen truce violations

By **SAMY MAGDY**

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The U.N. envoy for Yemen expressed concerns on Wednesday about violations of a cease-fire in the war-wrecked country, urging the warring sides to uphold the first nationwide truce in six years. Hans Grundberg said that while the truce has led to "significant reduction of violence" in Yemen, there were reports of "some hostile military activities," particularly around the central city of Marib.

He did not say which side was to blame for the violations but Yemen's internationally recognized government has accused the Iran-backed rebel Houthis of attacking their positions in southern and western Marib.

A Houthi spokesman was

not immediately available for comment.

"This truce is a step, an important one, but a fragile step, nonetheless," he said. "We need to make the best possible use of the window this truce gives us to work towards ending the conflict."

The Houthi rebels have been trying for over a year to capture energy-rich Marib from government forces.

But their efforts were dashed in recent months amid increasing support to the pro-government side from the Saudi-led coalition.

Grundberg told a virtual news conference that the United Nations was working on a coordination mechanism with the warring sides to maintain the truce, which was announced ear-

lier this month. It is supposed to last for two months.

Grundberg cautioned that the cease-fire is not being monitored by the U.N. and that the "responsibility to uphold the truce is squarely with the parties themselves."

Yemen's brutal civil war erupted in 2014, when the Iranian-backed Houthis seized the capital of Sanaa and forced the government into exile. The Saudi-led coalition entered the war in early 2015 to try restore the government to power.

The conflict has in recent years become a regional proxy war that has killed more than 150,000 people, including over 14,500 civilians. It has also created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.

The U.N.-announced truce



Yemeni police inspect a site of Saudi-led airstrikes targeting two houses in Sanaa, Yemen, Saturday, March 26, 2022.

Associated Press

also includes allowing shipments of fuel to arrive in Yemen's key port city of Hodeida and for passenger flights to resume from the airport in Sanaa. Both Hodeida and Sanaa are held by the Houthis.

The U.N. envoy said he has invited with both sides to convene a meeting to

agree on a reopening of roads around Taiz and other provinces as part of the truce.

"We look forward to their responses," he said. Taiz, which remains partially held by the forces fighting on behalf of the government, has been blockaded by the Houthis for years. □

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Location can be found by following the bakery smell upon arrival. Another option is Sibarita with their Latin inspired breakfast plates such as Huevos Rancheros, Cafetero Breakfast, Empanadas and more surrounded by a cozy picnic setting. Go Argentinian style at Che Bar and try their delicious omelet with chorizo/ham, mozzarella, onions, peppers, and tomatoes served with skillet potatoes and toast. Looking for a complete breakfast? Visit TGI Fridays and go for the crispy bacon or sausage, eggs your way and fluffy pancakes and toasts for only \$9.99, available all day – every day including unlimited coffee refills.

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Aruba to me - Euan Mathers

For today, we want to highlight a beautiful vacation memory from one of our visitors, namely Euan Mathers from Edinburgh, Scotland, who wrote to us saying:

"I first came to Aruba from Scotland in 2010 after I was invited to stay with my friend Pilar and her family. They showed me the highlights of Aruba as well as doing everyday 'crioyo' things such as meeting friends down by the beach or getting pastechi from a local bakery. Having had many good memories from my first visit,

I've returned to Aruba 12 years later.

I've so enjoyed visiting Arikok National Park, the amazing street murals of San Nicolas, a local short film festival and art exhibition at Ateliers'89 and spending time with friends catching up. It's such a beautiful country with such warm, friendly and hospitable people. Even though I'm a visitor I always feel welcome here.

Aruba to me is chilled vibes in the sunshine while spending time with good friends."□



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Honoring of loyal visitors at Divi Village

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees are: **Randy and Judy Zamarron** from Michigan, USA, who have been honored as Goodwill Ambassadors at their home away from home.

The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 consecutive years each title carries.

The couple loves coming to the island for its warm weather, beautiful beaches and friendly people.

Heyliger together with the representatives of Divi Village presented the certificates to the honorees and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



Honoring of loyal visitors at Divi Phoenix Resort



EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vaca-

tion destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were **Tomi and Pirita Karhu** from Texas who were honored as Distinguished Visitors and

Rita and Pasco Santilli from Rhode Island who were honored as Goodwill Ambassadors at their home away from home, who also celebrated the engagement of a family member on our Island.

The symbolic honorary title is presented on behalf of

the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba between the 10-20-35 consecutive years each title carries.

The couple loves coming to the island for its warm weather, beautiful beaches and the Island's friendly

people.

Heyliger together with the representatives of Divi Phoenix Resort presented the certificates to the honorees and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

Kimberly Palmer: Spring-clean finances with some automation

By **KIMBERLY PALMER** of **NerdWallet**

Automating financial tasks sounds like the perfect way to check mundane items like saving and paying bills off your to-do list with minimal effort. But there's a potential downside to giving up manual control.

When you automate bills, you may be less likely to review them and notice errors, or to catch yourself overspending. When you automate savings, you might forget to make adjustments as your goals or income change. As certified financial planner Catalina Franco-Cicero puts it, "Somebody has to make a decision and it should be a human, not a machine." That's why she suggests using automation in conjunction with frequent reviews and updates.

While signing up for automated bill payments and savings transfers can be part of your financial spring-cleaning, consider these strategies from financial experts.

FIRST, REVIEW YOUR CASH FLOW

Ambus Hunter, an accredited financial counselor in the Baltimore area, encourages his clients to study their cash flow before setting up automatic payments. That means taking a close look at the money coming in and going out each month, including the specific dates of those deposits and withdrawals.

"I don't like haphazard automation. If you aren't paying attention to cash flow and just set up a few withdrawals here and there, it



Dollar bills are shown in New York, Oct. 24, 2016.

can trip you up," he says.

START WITH BILLS THAT REMAIN THE SAME EACH MONTH

The easiest bills to automate are the ones that don't change: car payments, condo fees, phone and cable bills, and insurance payments, for example. You can reap benefits, such as avoiding late fees without worrying about getting hit with an outsize transfer, says John Mason, CFP and president of Mason & Associates in Newport News, Virginia.

"I would draw the line at variable charges such as your water bill, electricity and credit cards, unless you're disciplined enough to review those statements carefully even if they're automated," he says.

Ashli Smith, who lives in At-

lanta and shares money tips through her Twitter handle @BadGirlFinances, automates bills that generate discounts for doing so. Many cell phone providers offer monthly discounts of \$5 or more for using autopay, and insurance providers often offer similar discounts. Enrolling in autopay for student loans can give you a 0.25 percentage point interest rate reduction. Smith notes that you can often select the day for the withdrawal to ensure it falls before the due date but after your paycheck is deposited to prevent overdrawing your account.

"Start small. Don't put rent on autopay if you're not comfortable with that, but try little bills like phone bills," she suggests. With credit cards, Smith notes that you

can set up autopay for a certain amount to guarantee that you pay at least the minimum — or set a higher amount to pay down any accumulated debt. You can use pay-minimum automation to ensure you're never late, then make additional payments throughout the billing cycle to lower your credit usage and help your credit score.

CLOSELY REVIEW ALL CHARGES

Erin Lowry, author of the "Broke Millennial" book series, recommends checking to be sure payments were made. She had been automating her rent payment for six years when she noticed her payments stopped processing earlier this year.

"I never had an issue so had gotten a little lazy about

checking to see if it went through," she says. Then she realized she had a much larger bank balance than she expected. She discovered her rent had stopped processing — a problem she had to scramble to fix. Automating a bill also doesn't mean that you should stop shopping around for better options. Franco-Cicero, who is also a wealth advisor at Tobias Financial Advisors in Plantation, Florida, says that when it comes to car insurance, for example, it's worth checking for discounts and comparing options each time your policy is up for renewal.

AUTOMATE SAVINGS, WITH MANUAL TWEAKS

In addition to signing up to automate retirement contributions every paycheck, Mason suggests automatic savings for other goals. Every time he cuts costs to free up extra cash, he says, "I try to capture it immediately so it doesn't get lost in the shuffle." He cautions that you'll want to review the savings regularly and make sure you have enough money in your checking account to support the transfers, along with all of your other bills.

Adrienne Taylor-Wells, an accredited financial counselor and founder of Tailored WealthSaver — a counseling firm in Houston — points to an additional strategy of auto-saving: "I encourage clients to put the savings in a savings account in a separate bank so it's harder to get that money and easier to save."



FedEx Logistics opens global headquarters in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Shipping giant FedEx Corp. said its logistics subsidiary has opened a new global headquarters in downtown Memphis, Tennessee.

FedEx Logistics held an event Tuesday to mark the opening of its offices in the former Gibson guitar factory, just steps from historic Beale Street and the FedEx-

Forum sports and concert venue in Memphis, a news release said.

FedEx Logistics said it invested more than \$50 million to renovate the building.

"Great cities have great buildings," said Udo Lange, president & CEO of FedEx Logistics. "From this magnificent facility, our employees will collaborate, innovate,

and serve our global customers."

FedEx Corp. is based in Memphis, with operations at Memphis International Airport. A subsidiary of FedEx Corp., FedEx Logistics said it provides air and ocean cargo, warehousing and distribution, customs brokerage and other services to customers. □



Delivery vehicles depart the FedEx Ship Center in Cranberry Township, Pa., on June 26, 2019.

Associated Press

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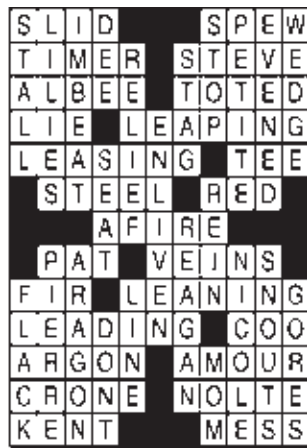
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Grating sound
- 5 Troop member
- 10 List-ending abbr.
- 11 Joint account sharer
- 12 Flaring star
- 13 Kilt pattern
- 14 Dentist's request
- 16 Warm spot
- 20 Chefs' protectors
- 23 Flower plot
- 24 Saloon orders
- 25 Flower girl, often
- 27 Bikini top
- 28 Soup dumpling
- 29 Christmas season
- 32 Something for nothing
- 36 Evergreen shrub
- 39 See the sights
- 40 Marzipan base
- 41 Cuzco native
- 42 Lacking flavor
- 43 Invites

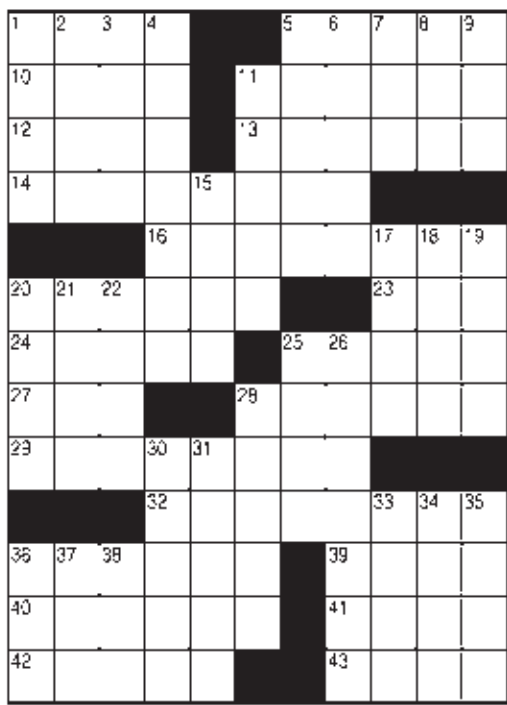
DOWN

- 1 City on the Truckee
- 2 Resting on
- 3 Except for
- 4 Take into account, as contingencies
- 5 Digging tool
- 6 Hearts
- 7 Ump's call
- 8 Can. neighbor
- 9 Toe count
- 11 Mixes
- 15 Takes the title
- 17 Skeptical comment
- 18 1920s art style



Yesterday's answer

- 19 Genesis site
- 20 First name in advice
- 21 Cuzco setting
- 22 Authentic
- 25 Junction
- 26 Resistance to change
- 28 Brandish
- 30 Zac of "Hair-spray"
- 31 Pollster's find
- 33 Charged atoms
- 34 Pond paddler
- 35 Important times
- 36 Research spot
- 37 Completely
- 38 Thurman of "Gat-taca"



4-7

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-7

CRYPTOQUOTE

VMDG ALQ CDJFM PMD DGO

LN ALQC CLYD. PHD J TGLP

HG HP JGO MJGS LG.

NCJGTHG O. CLIBDKDIP

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WHEN SOMEONE SHOWS YOU WHO THEY ARE, BELIEVE THEM THE FIRST TIME. — MAYA ANGELOU

Zoos hiding birds as avian flu spreads in North America



Magellan penguins stand in their enclosure at the Blank Park Zoo, Tuesday, April 5, 2022, in Des Moines, Iowa.

Associated Press

By JOSH FUNK

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Zoos across North America are moving their birds indoors and away from people and wildlife as they try to protect them from the highly contagious and potentially deadly avian influenza. Penguins may be the only birds visitors to many zoos can see right now, because they already are kept inside and usually protected behind glass in their exhibits, making it harder for the bird flu to reach them. Nearly 23 million chickens and turkeys have already been killed across the United States to limit the spread of the virus, and zoos are working hard to prevent any of their birds from meeting the same fate. It would be especially upsetting for zoos to have to kill any of the endangered or threatened species in their care.

"It would be extremely devastating," said Maria Franke, who is the manager of welfare science at Toronto Zoo, which has less than two dozen Loggerhead Shrike songbirds that it's breeding with the hope of reintroducing them into

the wild. "We take amazing care and the welfare and well being of our animals is the utmost importance. There's a lot of staff that has close connections with the animals that they care for here at the zoo."

Toronto Zoo workers are adding roofs to some outdoor bird exhibits and double-checking the mesh surrounding enclosures to ensure it will keep wild birds out. Birds shed the virus through their droppings and nasal discharge. Experts say it can be spread through contaminated equipment, clothing, boots and vehicles carrying supplies. Research has shown that small birds that squeeze into zoo exhibits or buildings can also spread the flu, and that mice can even track it inside. So far, no outbreaks have been reported at zoos, but there have been wild birds found dead that had the flu. For example, a wild duck that died in a behind-the-scenes area of the Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, Iowa, after tornadoes last month tested positive, zoo spokesman Ryan Bickel said. Most of the steps zoos are taking are designed to

prevent contact between wild birds and zoo animals. In some places, officials are requiring employees to change into clean boots and don protective gear before entering bird areas. When bird flu cases are found in poultry, officials order the entire flock to be killed because the virus is so contagious. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has indicated that zoos might be able to avoid that by isolating infected birds and possibly euthanizing a small number of them.

Sarah Woodhouse, director of animal health at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, said she is optimistic after talking with state and federal regulators. "They all agree that ordering us to depopulate a large part of our collection would be the absolute last-ditch effort. So they're really interested in working with us to see what we can do to make sure that we're not going to spread the disease while also being able to take care of our birds and not have to euthanize," Woodhouse said. Among the precautions zoos are taking is to keep birds in smaller groups so that if a case is found, only a few would be affected. The USDA and state veterinarians would make the final decision about which birds had to be killed.

"Euthanasia is really the only way to keep it from spreading," said Luis Padilla, who is vice president of animal collections at the Saint Louis Zoo. "That's why we have so many of these very proactive measures in place." □

Casa del Mar 2BR/2B

Week 2/1113 (17k);

Week 5/1315 (19k);

Week 8/1113 (18k);

Week 8/1409 (18k);

Week 9/1218 (16k);

Week 10/1207 (16k);

Week 13/1509 (13k);

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Week 15/1217 (10k).

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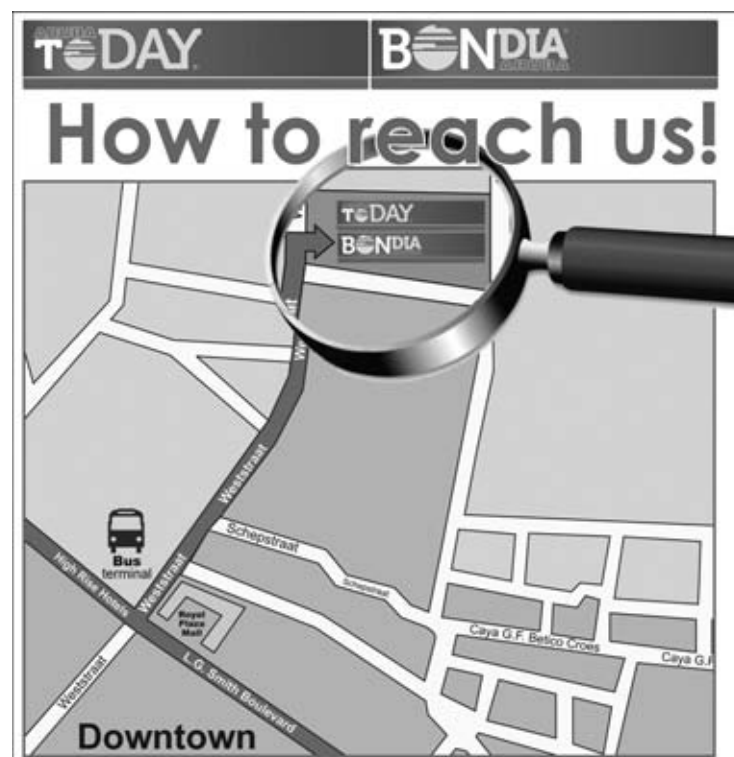
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Assistant Director
Xiomara Arends

Editors
Pilar Flores
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Sales
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds
classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection
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'Winning Time' shows authentic human side of Laker legends

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.
LOS ANGELES (AP) —

John C. Reilly remembered being enthralled watching "Showtime" basketball with Magic Johnson's no-look passes and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's patented sky-hook, but the actor never really knew the backstory behind the Los Angeles Lakers dynasty.

Reilly quickly found out after stepping into his role as late Laker owner Jerry Buss in the HBO series "Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty," which airs Sundays. The 10-episode series follows the professional and personal lives of the team donning purple and gold in the 1980s and how the franchise became one of the most revered in professional sports.

"That was the vehicle through which the entire (basketball) world was changed," said Reilly about the Lakers, which was bought by Buss in 1979. "From the world of basketball, it was a different thing once Jerry bought the team. He innovated so many things, and he changed the entire world of showbiz. When you think of Kobe, Shaq, Magic, these guys came to L.A. and became worldwide players. I don't know if that happens for every team."

The series stars Reilly along with Quincy Isaiah as Johnson, Jason Clarke as Jerry West, Solomon Hughes as Abdul-Jabbar, Sally Field as Jerry's mother, Jessie Buss, Hadley Robinson as the young Jeanie Buss and Adrien Brody, who plays



This image released by HBO shows Brett Cullen, portraying Bill Sharman, left, and John C. Reilly, portraying Jerry Buss, standing, in a scene from the series "Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty."

Associated Press

Pat Riley. The story is based on the book "Showtime: Magic, Kareem, Riley and the Los Angeles Lakers Dynasty of the 1980s" by Jeff Pearlman.

Sunday's show marked the midway point of its run, focusing on Abdul-Jabbar's religious journey. The fifth episode also touches on Jeanie Buss' recruitment of the Laker Girls — including young dancer Paula Abdul — and Jerry Buss wanting to improve the look of the franchise.

Before portraying Buss, Reilly had heard about his reputation as a self-made millionaire who became known in Los Angeles for his flamboyant demeanor and for bringing Hollywood entertainment into the NBA landscape. But after read-

ing the script and doing more research on Buss, he learned about him being a chemist, mathematician and just an overall mysterious person.

"It's like unpeeling the layers of an onion getting to know this guy," Reilly said. "There are the public facts of what he did, when he bought the team, how much he paid, what he had to do to accomplish that, the big setbacks they went through that first year. But after that first year, he became a private guy. He would get like one interview per year or like a local reporter to talk about the team. Other than that, it was just this kind of mysterious image of this guy who was just really enjoying his life and dating a lot."

Field, a longtime Lakers fan, said she agreed to participate in the show before reading the script. The actor said the series helped her reminisce about the moments when the Lakers merged its basketball world with Hollywood.

"I am such a big basketball fan, but then the show was about so much more than that," said Field, who would attend games with her two sons. "It really takes a look at so much. You know, the culture in the '70s in L.A. Black culture, business culture, a bunch of dysfunctional families and what it is to take these talented athletes out of their homes and just plop them down in the middle of the world, essentially, and what it does to them. So it has a lot to

talk about."

Field said she was impressed by how the series shows the maturation of Jeanie Buss, the current controlling owner and president of the Lakers.

"Young Jeanie wasn't even allowed to be in the room and at the table yet, but was inserting her young ideas," Field said. "(Jeanie) was right about bringing dance into it, Hollywood, glamour, movie stars on the court and sitting them there right on the edge, and even bringing rock music in during the downtimes. They brought concerts in and used the arena. I don't think that had been done before."

Isaiah said he really wanted to hit the mark in making Johnson appear like a normal human being, instead of just the NBA legend, HIV advocate and successful businessman.

"I think that's the joy that I get in trying to figure out how to do it in a way that makes him a person, you know, makes him a human," he said. "And it doesn't give off this like maybe you could see that he's going to become an icon, but he's not one yet. Just like playing it from there and trusting the people around me and allowing myself to be in the moment and be authentic."

DeVaughn Nixon grew up being a Laker watching his father, Norm Nixon, play the guard position on the team. He said the series will continue to show how the Lakers changed sport's marketability. □



This cover image released by Penguin Press shows "Time is a Mother" by Ocean Vuong.

Associated Press

Lost and found in Ocean Vuong's 'Time Is a Mother'

By AMANCAI BIRABEN
Associated Press

Life's aftermath ebbs and flows throughout Ocean Vuong's poetry collection "Time Is a Mother." An ode to his mother's passing, Vuong orbits the contours of grief, embedding them into clausal configurations and juxtaposed tones. These structures are reflected in Vuong's themes of time and place, parent and child, nation and individual, and strength and weak-

ness as he unfolds the logic of loss.

In "Snow Theory," the poet lies in his mother's outline in the snow, "something being destroyed in a blizzard." In "Beautiful Short Loser," he wears her wedding dress backwards in the street as he plays air guitar. "Dear Rose" recounts the violence that has shaped his mother's life while uncovering the way language comes alive through visceral experience.

Though grounded in the loss of his mother, Vuong branches out to trace other instances of departure. Loss is a peaceful release, a sudden shift. His friend's top surgery that makes them more whole, the fish with the narrator's face before it swims away, a loaf of rye bread rising out of itself. Loss is fleeting transition.

Loss is a violent transition, too. A dreamed car crash reveals Vuong's desire to be closer to his father; still

shots of the people of his home nation Vietnam insinuate the proximity between their life and death; the oversized outfits his relatives wear reminiscent of a country that no longer exists; his uncle's suicide conveyed as a purposeful death.

Retrogression, lists and notes structure some of Vuong's words, but the poet's linguistic ferocity illuminates his mother's spirit from the rays of memory. □

Locked in: MLB set for delayed openers after a long winter

By **JAKE SEINER**
AP Baseball Writer

It'll end up being 157 days between the moment Freddie Freeman and the Atlanta Braves won last year's World Series and the start of the 2022 baseball season. Everything in between? Tough to sum that up quickly.

A record spending spree on free agents. A bitter work stoppage that delayed opening day.

Maybe most unthinkable of all: Freeman isn't even in Atlanta anymore.

A lot to catch up on before the Chicago Cubs and Milwaukee Brewers open the season at Wrigley Field on Thursday afternoon, the first of seven games that day. Certainly, the sport is ready to move forward and wash off a winter when owners and players fought — fiercely and occasionally publicly — over how to split the game's billions.

Luckily, the legal work is now moved to the side, and the real fun can begin. What can Shohei Ohtani possibly do for an encore after an unprecedented year of dominance on the mound and at the plate? Will the many millions spent by Mets owner Steve Cohen bring a championship trophy to Queens? Can anyone stop the Dodgers after they lured Freeman back to his Southern California home?

Time to find out.

Before the first pitch is delivered Thursday, here's what to know:

THE NEW GUYS

Baseball's unusual offseason was split into two segments — a flurry of action before the 99-day lockout began Dec. 2, and a scramble to get rosters set when it lifted March 10.

The Rangers were champions of Part 1. Texas signed Corey Seager and Marcus Semien for a combined \$500 million, solidifying their middle infield with two monster contracts.

Those deals were part of a one-day record \$1.4 billion spent on free agents right before the offseason went dark. Cy Young Award winner Robbie Ray left Toronto



Los Angeles Dodgers' Freddie Freeman is congratulated by teammates in the dugout after scoring on a double by Trea Turner during the first inning of a spring training baseball game against the Los Angeles Angels Tuesday, April 5, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

for Seattle, and the Blue Jays replaced him with former Giant Kevin Gausman. The Tigers ponied up for shortstop Javier Báez and starter Eduardo Rodriguez. Even the Marlins tried making a splash, dropping \$53 million on Avisail García.

Max Scherzer also signed early, joining Cohen and the Mets on a \$130 million, three-year deal. He then turned his attention to baseball's labor fight, where he was one of the lead voices for players at the table. He's back to his day job now — and good thing for New York, with two-time Cy Young Award-winning teammate Jacob deGrom beginning the year on the injured list.

When shops re-opened in March, the most notable drama surrounded Freeman and the Braves. Atlanta general manager Alex Anthopoulos appeared to end any hopes for a reunion when he traded for Oakland slugger Matt Olson and gave him a \$168 million, eight-year deal.

Freeman landed with the Dodgers for \$162 million

over six years, then acknowledged during his introductory press conference that he always figured on being a lifelong Brave. The Minnesota Twins made another huge post-lockout deal, convincing former Astros shortstop Carlos Correa to sign a \$105.3 million, three-year deal with player opt outs after the first two seasons. His stay might be short, but Correa has pledged to help instill a "championship culture" in the Twin Cities, where the ball club has lost 18 straight postseason games dating to 2004.

Other notable moves: Clayton Kershaw went back to the Dodgers, the rival Giants locked up lefty Carlos Rodón, and the Rockies signed Kris Bryant.

Also new in the NL West is San Diego Padres manager Bob Melvin, who was granted his release by Oakland after 11 years to lead Fernando Tatis Jr. and Co. Melvin's old job went to Mark Kotsay, getting his first crack at managing after a 17-year playing career. The Cardinals are under new

direction, too, promoting 35-year-old Oliver Marmol after Mike Shildt was stunningly fired despite being a finalist for NL Manager of the Year.

RULE CHANGES

Baseball's new collective bargaining agreement brought with it several changes that fans will notice quickly. Most notably, the designated hitter has been adopted by the National League full-time.

The postseason field was expanded to 12 teams from 10, with the top two teams in each league getting first-round byes and a best-of-three wild-card round replacing the old one-game playoffs.

The "zombie" runner is back for extra innings for one more season amid concerns over player health with the season condensed to fit in 162 games. The rule automatically places a runner at second base for each team to begin each inning after the ninth.

One that fans may like: umpires will now be given microphones and asked to explain rulings after replay

reviews.

One they might not like: the league now has the right to place advertising patches on team uniforms, thought the earliest they would appear is the postseason.

NEW THREADS

Cleveland is unveiling a new team name and logos this season, transforming into the Guardians after years of acrimony of their former name, which many considered offensive. They'll play their first official game as the Guardians on Thursday, when Shane Bieber likely toes the mound at Kansas City. They play their first home game April 15 against San Francisco.

ROOKIES TO WATCH

Seiya Suzuki, Bobby Witt Jr. and Julio Rodríguez headline an exciting class of rookies set to debut on opening day.

Suzuki, a 27-year-old Japanese star, will take his first crack at U.S. baseball with the Chicago Cubs after signing an \$85 million, five-year deal. The outfielder has power, speed and has even shown off some personality despite the language barrier, learning to say "Mike Trout, I love you" at his news conference.

Witt is the game's top prospect and will start at third base for the Royals. He could be a five-tool talent with exceptional power. Rodríguez, with Seattle, ranks just behind Witt on the national radar and could be the key to ending the Mariners' 20-year postseason drought.

Another name to know: Reds starter Hunter Greene, who reached 104 mph at Triple-A last year.

ONE MORE TIME

The Cardinals are reuniting Albert Pujols with Yadier Molina and Adam Wainwright for what could be a special goodbye for the trio that won the 2006 World Series together for St. Louis. Molina has already said it will be his final season and Wainwright hinted he's likely done after 2022, too.

The 42-year-old Pujols is also likely to retire after playing out a \$2.5 million, one-year deal. □

Attorneys General warn NFL to improve treatment of women

NEW YORK (AP) — The attorneys general of six states have written to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, expressing concern over the league's treatment of female employees and admonishing him for a lack of improvement to the league's workplace culture.

Without improvement, the attorneys general warned of potential legal action.

The letter outlines concerns of gender discrimination ranging from the NFL's treatment of women who have experienced domestic violence to the hiring and promotion of women in NFL offices. It comes as Congress investigates how the league has handled claims of sexual harassment in the front office of the Washing-



NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell answers questions from reporters, at a press conference after the close of the NFL owner's meeting, Tuesday, March 29, 2022, at The Breakers resort in Palm Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

ton Commanders.

The letter was signed by Letitia James, the attor-

ney general of New York, where the league is headquartered, as well as the

attorneys general of Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon and Washington State. The New York Times first reported the letter being sent.

That letter also cited a Times article that included allegations from more than 30 former NFL employees who said they experienced problems, including unwanted touching from male bosses; attending parties where prostitutes were hired; being passed over for promotions based on their gender; and being pushed out for complaining about discrimination.

"The NFL must do better—pink jerseys are not a replacement for equal treatment and full inclusion of women in the workplace," the attorneys generals

wrote. "Our offices will use the full weight of our authority to investigate and prosecute allegations of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation by employers throughout our states, including at the National Football League."

In an email response to The Associated Press, NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said: "We share the commitment of the attorneys general to ensuring that all of our workplaces - including the league office and 32 clubs - are diverse, inclusive and free from discrimination and harassment. We have made great strides over the years in support of that commitment, but acknowledge that we, like many organizations, have more work to do. We look forward to sharing with the attorneys general the policies, practices, protocols, education programs and partnerships we have implemented to act on this commitment and confirm that the league office and our clubs maintain a respectful workplace where all our employees, including women, have an opportunity to thrive."

McCarthy pointed out such ongoing league programs as a comprehensive employee training initiative through partnerships with organizations such as RISE, GLAAD, Paradigm, and The Winters Group; and Internal Affinity Groups, in which employees can interact, learn and support each other within smaller communities like BEN (Black Engagement Network), PIN (Parents Initiative Network) and WIN (Women's Interactive Network).

Last month, the NFL changed what is known as the "Rooney Rule," designed to ensure more opportunities for women and racial minorities. Beginning this season, all 32 clubs must employ a female or a member of an ethnic or racial minority to serve as an offensive assistant coach. The person will receive a one-year contract and work closely with the head coach and offensive staff to gain experience. □

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